



UNIVERSITY OF
CALGARY

Department of Psychology

PSYC 650: Research Seminar in Clinical Psychology

Fall 2007/Winter 2008

Instructor:	Dr. Candace Konnert	Office:	Admin 233C
Location:	Admin 253	Office hours:	By appointment
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Objective: This course is required in years 1 and 2 of the M.Sc. program and has rotating content. The course has two objectives. First, to assist students with their professional development, and to provide them with information and advice for success as a clinical psychology trainee. Second, to help students develop their clinical research skills. Specific course objectives include (1) allowing students to share and develop their own research ideas and plans, (2) developing and enhancing skills in critical thinking and integrating research findings (including the ability to separate “science” from “pseudoscience”), (3) developing oral and visual presentation skills, and (4) providing exposure to theoretical and methodological issues in students’ research areas. Students are required to present their own research at the formulation and design stages and to provide constructive feedback to their peers regarding their research proposals.

This seminar includes lectures, student presentations, chapter critiques, and discussion. Your active involvement and participation are central to the success of this course. Lively, thoughtful discussions will make the class more interesting and enjoyable for all, so your efforts to participate will pay off.

Required text: Lilienfeld, S. O., Lynn, S. J., & Lohr, J. M. (2003). *Science and pseudoscience in clinical psychology*. New York: Guilford. This text is available in the bookstore. Other readings will be assigned.

Requirements and evaluation procedures: This course meets for two hours biweekly during the fall and winter terms. The grading format for this course is credit/no credit. Students must pass all components of the course to receive a passing grade for the course. Consistent with the Faculty of Graduate Studies policy, a passing grade is defined as a B- (75%) or higher.

The grading criteria are as follows:

Attendance and class participation (30%) – a P/F midterm mark will be given
Research presentation (30%)
Final exam (40%)

Class Attendance and Participation. Students must make every effort to attend all sessions, and must confer with the instructor in advance if they find they must miss a class. Note that a significant portion of your grade is based on class discussion. In order to effectively take part in a class discussion, participants need to have not only read the material but also thought about it. So, in terms of evaluating this component of the course, I will specifically be looking for discussion contributions that

reflect not only the essence of the reading but also the ability to critically evaluate the content and to integrate it with other areas in psychology, or, other relevant disciplines.

Research presentation. The research presentation will be different depending on whether you are in your first year of the program, or are more senior.

First-year students will each make a 45-minute presentation on their thesis research, following the outline below. Class members who are not presenting in a given class are expected to ask questions and provide constructive feedback on the project.

Recognizing that senior students have more research knowledge and experience in their areas of expertise, they will present a more general talk on the conceptual and methodological issues that are unique to their research areas (e.g., cross-cultural research, substance abuse, health, aging, theory, psychopathology, etc.). The focus of the presentation should be quite broad and might cover topics such as the state of existing theory, ethical issues, definitional issues, specific research designs, sampling, pragmatic issues related to doing research in this area, etc. (note that this is not a comprehensive list). To whatever extent possible, students should integrate their own research and discuss how some of the general issues have influenced their research and ways they have dealt with them (or hope to). The goal of the presentation is to familiarize your colleagues with the research issues that are unique to your area. The presentation should be 45 minutes in length, with time at the end for discussion. **Two weeks** prior to your presentation, please provide Dr. Konnert with one or two articles that summarize the issues in your research area and an outline of your presentation. She will review these and provide feedback. Please disseminate the articles to your colleagues **one week** in advance of your presentation. If you have any questions about your presentation, please consult with Dr. Konnert well in advance of the presentation.

Note that there will be a pc and data projector available for the full term.

Final exam. The final exam will be an opportunity to demonstrate your knowledge of research methodology, your ability to critically evaluate the literature, and your understanding of “science versus pseudoscience.” Further details will be provided closer to the time of the exam.

Class schedule (Fall 2007 - Winter 2008)

Date	Topic	Required readings
September 19	Introduction to the course Research presentation – Michaela Zverina	
October 3	Professional development issues – M.Sc. I students only	
October 17	Methodological and conceptual issues in community psychology research: The long-term care “community” (Konnert)	Jason et al., (2004). Participatory community research: Theories and methods in action. Wash.DC: APA (Chapts. 1, 6, 11)
October 31	Science and pseudoscience: clinical judgment and questionable assessment techniques Methodological and conceptual issues in student’s research area – M.Sc. II	Lilienfeld et al., Chapters 1-3 Readings TBA
November 14	Controversies re: dissociative identity disorder Methodological and conceptual issues in student’s research area – M.Sc. II	Lilienfeld et al., Chapter 5 Readings TBA
November 28	Psychotherapy research and new age therapies Methodological and conceptual issues in student’s research area – M.Sc. II	Lilienfeld et al., Chapters 6-7 Readings TBA

Date	Topic	Required readings
January 16	Problematic memory recovery techniques Methodological and conceptual issues in student’s research area – M.Sc. II	Lilienfeld et al., Chapter 8 Readings TBA
January 30	Herbal treatments and antidepressant medication Methodological and conceptual issues in student’s research area – M.Sc. II	Lilienfeld et al., Chapter 11 Readings TBA
February 13	Controversies regarding self help and the media Methodological and conceptual issues in student’s research area – M.Sc. II	Lilienfeld et al., Chapters 14-16 Readings TBA
February 27	M.Sc. research presentations (2)	
March 12	M.Sc. research presentations (2)	
March 26	M.Sc. research presentations (2)	
April 9	Final exam	

Outline for Student Research Presentations – M.Sc. I

When you present the design of your thesis research, include a discussion of each the following areas, in roughly the order presented. The basic idea is that you will lead the audience logically through the planning of your thesis and its proposed execution. Depending at what point in the semester you are presenting, it's understood that you may not have every detail of your study determined. Please leave some time (5 -10 minutes) for questions at the end. It's a good idea to use visual aids, such as PowerPoint or overheads, to organize your presentation.

1. **Title of project; supervisor; committee members; date of pro-seminar**
2. **Background**—What research, published or unpublished, led up to this project? What concepts do we need to know to understand what you are studying?
3. **Study question/key hypotheses**
4. **Rationale**—Why is this study important? Why should we care about it? How does this study extend theory and/or our knowledge base?
5. **Methods**—Sample size, description; how is sample being ascertained? Procedure? Data analytic approach?
6. **Status of the research project**—If you have not already, when do you anticipate starting and completing data collection?
7. **Results and conclusions**—any preliminary?
8. **Methodological challenges**—What weaknesses or limitations of this study can you identify? To what extent does it or does it not meet the “gold standard?”
9. **What are some things you have learned** in designing this study?
10. **Pending successful completion of this study, what direction should this research take?**

The criteria for marking your presentation are as follows (weight of each criterion will depend on the stage of your research):

- Organization and clarity of content
- Knowledge of the extant literature and your study as an extension of this line of research
- Your ability to demonstrate the significance of the research and the rationale for your study
- Critical evaluation of your methodology (strengths and weaknesses) and suggestions for improvement (in an ideal world with vast resources of time and money)!
- Your ideas for future research

Some tips on making successful PowerPoint presentations

- Use a dark background with light lettering to maximize readability.
- Use large font sizes (i.e., > about 24) so it's easily legible even from across the room.
- Use telegraphic sentences and phrases to minimize the number of words on any given slide, so the audience focuses on what you have to say instead of busily reading everything on your slide. Related to this, DO NOT read directly from your slides but use them as a starting point for the points you want to make.
- Use pictures and graphs to illustrate your points wherever you can.